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Reagan for the Defense

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His vision of the future turns the budget battle into a star war



The crusade he has embarked upon requires that he balance two competing messages: the U.S. must resolutely rearm to counter the Soviet threat, but it must project its peaceful intent along with its military might. Congress must be convinced that his \$274 billion defense budget for fiscal 1984 ought not to be gutted. The nuclear freeze movement at home and abroad has to be countered so that the U.S. can upgrade its strategic

forces and proceed with deployment of NATO missiles. And the Soviet Union needs to be persuaded that the West will not shrink from nuclear competition if its proposals for arms reductions are spurned. In a television address last week, Ronald Reagan confronted this complicated balancing act by graphically depicting what he claims is Moscow's "margin of superiority" while broaching a surprising and controversial idea for preventing nuclear war.

Reagan refused to retreat an inch in

defending what is now proposed to be a \$2 trillion, five-year military spending plan. Speaking just 33 minutes after the House voted to cut by more than half his proposed 10% increase in next year's Pentagon budget, the President sharply assailed the arguments of his critics as "nothing more than noise based on ignorance." Said he: "They're the same kind of talk that led the democracies to neglect their defenses in the 1930s and invited the tragedy of World War II." In order to emphasize



In his speech from the Oval Office last week, Reagan used declassified spy-plane photographs to show the spread of Soviet influence. The communications base, above, is run by 1,500 Soviet technicians. The Soviet helicopters shown in Nicaragua, below, carried the Pope on his recent visit. The Cuban facility pictured behind the President is a landing strip for Soviet MiG fighters. Reagan also used charts like the ones on the far right to show production of conventional arms over the past decade

